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ADMINISTRATION AND SUPERVISION

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Thesis. The time has come in the evolution of education when administration and supervision of instruction should be entirely separated from the kindergarten through the high school.

Before giving reasons in support of this thesis it may be well to take a survey of the field of administration and of the field of supervision. These surveys will reveal the nature of the work required in each field.

THE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR

The duties of the school administrator are as follows:

I. As director he (1) selects subordinates; (2) inspects work of various school departments; (3) inspects schools; (4) is responsible for (a) results in each department, (b) the selection of textbooks, (c) improvement of teachers, (d) the application of salary schedule, (e) promotion of teachers; (5) is a court of appeal for (a) subordinates, (b) parents, (c) teachers; (6) is chairman of educational meetings.

II. As executive he (1) is the agent of the board of education; (2) is a member of committees of the board of education; (3) represents the board in the community (a) as a member of civic organizations, (b) in public meetings, (c) with the press; (4) is responsible for (a) the budget, (b) buildings, (c) janitor service, (d) supplies, (e) records, (f) reports.

III. As organizer he (1) is responsible for the organization of (a) the whole school system, (b) each department; (2) is responsible for the policies of (a) administration, (b) instruc-

tion, (*c*) inspection, (*d*) supervision; (3) is responsible for the development of the system; (4) is responsible for the courses of study.

Roughly the foregoing gives a bird's-eye view of the functions of the school administrator. In a large, highly organized system of schools the principals are in fact the superintendents in the buildings or districts under their charge. Most of the duties enumerated they perform under one guise or another. Some of these duties have been specifically delegated by the superintendent, and others are assumed according to the principal's conception of his educational responsibility and opportunity.

It would appear that in this multiplicity of administrative duties one man, be he superintendent or principal, would find enough work to fill the day. As a matter of fact, if these duties are actually performed, there is little or no time left for the work of supervision of instruction, a field over which we will now cast a glance.

THE SUPERVISOR OF INSTRUCTION

The supervisor (1) must be an authority on (*a*) subject-matter for study in the grades supervised, (*b*) the courses of study, (*c*) general pedagogy, (*d*) special methods, (*e*) educational standards and measurements; (2) must be competent in the diagnosis of pupils' (*a*) capacities, (*b*) grading, (*c*) testing, (*d*) motivating, (*e*) promoting; (3) must be competent in diagnosis of teachers' (*a*) abilities, (*b*) limitations, (*c*) incentives, (*d*) promotions; (4) must have exceptional skill (*a*) in leading, (*b*) in inspiring, (*c*) in teaching, (*d*) in securing co-operation, (*e*) in planning and conducting meetings.

From this review of the work of supervision it appears that it is far removed from administration. The two have no relation in any way. Even "inspection" of instruction, which looms rather large in the work of administration, has a very

small place in supervision. It is absorbed, so to say, in the larger tasks of measuring the effectiveness of instruction and of improving its quality.

The great difference between administration and supervision is seen from another point of view when one considers the ways in which instruction must be improved, if it is to be improved at all.

Instruction may be improved:

1. *By showing the teacher how.*—No one should assume to supervise instruction who cannot *demonstrate*.

A teacher may also be shown by having her visit another teacher, or by illustrative teaching in a teachers' meeting. But these means are often ineffective because teachers observe with closed or prejudiced eyes; because they are unable to discover the essential and the general in a setting of nonessentials and in a particular illustration; because, even if they look with open and unbiased mind and see what is fundamental, they are unable to "carry over" what they see into their own practice.

A supervisor is here needed to help a teacher *understand* what she has seen; to help her *determine relative values*; and to help her *modify her own habitual practices* without mechanically copying another's methods and devices.

2. *By an active propaganda of desirable educational aims and methods.* By this, instruction is modified. This propaganda should consist of dissemination of information, of creating influences that inspire, of varied interpretations in terms of different subjects and in different grades.

3. *By personal conferences.*—Short-cut, mechanical criticisms, such as notes left on the teacher's desk and letters dictated in the superintendent's office, are not largely effective. Personal conferences take time, and are best held in the school-room where the exercise under discussion took place.

4. *By staying with a teacher until results are attained.*—A teacher is, like other people, a creature of habits. She teaches

more often as she was taught in her early years than as she was taught to teach in the normal school. Relatively few teachers can of and by themselves change their teaching habits. A supervisor is needed to stay with them until the strength of the old habits is weakened and the new skill is evidently beginning.

But, again, the teacher's task is complicated by the new elements that society and a clearer educational vision are making. These demands are so fundamental and far-reaching that teachers alone are unable to meet them. Many of them know, or at least know about, these demands and sincerely approve them, but they confess that they do not know how to put them to work. It may be said in passing that school administrators do not know how to meet them. They will be met, they are being met, only by the co-operating efforts of teachers and specialists in supervision.

To enumerate these new demands is to demonstrate at the same time their difficulty. Teachers are asked (1) to create a new type of school in which each individual shall be trained as an individual and at the same time shall be trained to relate himself to a social group; (2) to teach skilfully, but at the same time to train pupils in habits of skilful learning; (3) to readjust, simplify, practicalize, enlarge, and nationalize the scope of school interests; (4) to apply quantitative and qualitative standards to educational accomplishments.

No one who understands even superficially what this program of demands involves, if it is to be set to work in the schools of this country, will deny that it requires for its working out a body of competent supervisors, specialists in the field of educational theory and practice, who shall devote all their time and powers to this one task. It is no reflection on the sincerity and ability of superintendents and principals to say that *they* cannot do it and that they are not doing it as a "side-line" to administration. The work of administration *must* be done or

the schools will close; therefore the superintendent, assistant superintendent, or principal who has administrative duties will of necessity, for lack of time, translate his supervisory work in terms of inspection, criticism, and personal opinion. When thus translated, supervision becomes mechanical, destructive, irritating. Teachers endure it, but are not helped by it. It never has and cannot make modern schools.

Returning now to our thesis, namely, that "the time has come in the evolution of education when administration and supervision of instruction should be entirely separated," we may summarize the reasons already given at some length in support of it and state briefly one or two others:

1. Administrative work and supervision of instruction are so different that they require (*a*) different personal qualities, (*b*) different training, (*c*) different experience.

2. Administration and supervision have become so highly developed, technical, and specialized that one person cannot master both.

3. Of the two, administration always crowds out supervision when they compete for the time and attention of one who has both responsibilities.

4. Improvement in instruction has come as a matter of fact only where competent supervisors have given all their time to this work.

In confirmation of this last generalization attention is called to the following facts. At least the writer believes them to be facts.

1. The best, the most modern, teaching today in the public schools of America is found in the primary grades. These grades have more generally been under supervisors of instruction than have other grades.

2. The poorest teaching, the teaching least affected by modern ideas, is found in the grammar grades. Here, except in the so-called special subjects, supervision has been done by

principals, superintendents, and assistant superintendents, primarily administrative officers.

3. High-school teaching is admittedly on a relatively low level of efficiency. The principal frankly admits that he is not competent to supervise instruction in the varied subjects taught in his school. The head of a department, when there is one, frankly admits that he or she has not time to supervise. High-school teaching is to a high degree governed by a *laissez-faire*, *laissez-aller* policy.

4. The so-called special subjects are in general far better taught under the supervision of specialists. In fact, where there is no special supervision, these subjects are generally neglected.

5. When and where competent supervision, unallied to administration, has been introduced, then and there immediately begin improvements in school practices. This has been notably true in country schools where the county supervisor, sometimes called the county helping teacher, has been employed, as in New Jersey and other states.

It would appear that the nature of the educational problem and the history of educational practice unite in a demand for the separation of supervision from administration.